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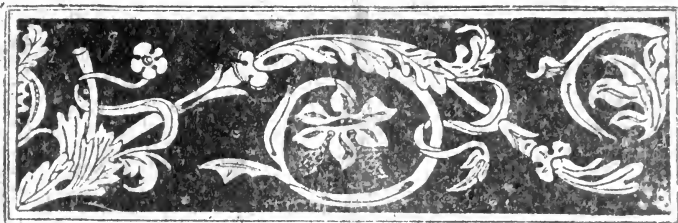
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'HIS WAY OUT

—BY—

GLADYS RUTH BRIDGHAM



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FRANKLIN, OHIO

also

DENVER, COLO.
944 S. Logan St.

THIS WAY OUT

GLADYS RUTH BRIDGHAM

Author of "Polly Lou," "Brown Eyed Betty," Etc.

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DEC 19 1921

PUBLISHED BY

ELDRIDGE ENTERTAINMENT HOUSE

FRANKLIN, OHIO

DENVER, COLO.

CAST

PROFESSOR NICHOLAS SPERING

DR. PHILIP MERTON

JACK, his son

TOM

DICK

HARRY

}

Jack's Chums

ALICE

LUCY

KITTY

}

their friends

MRS. O'MALLEY

BETTY, her daughter



This Way Out

Scene—Prof. Sperring's room in Mrs. O'Malley's lodging house.

Door to hall left—alcove left back (on stage where this is impossible, place couch left back). Window right back—table near this window with the professor's invention. A simple apparatus of some kind is all that is necessary with some little attachment which will give a buzzing sound. Fireplace right and door to closet right front. Arm chair center right and table down left; chairs left and right of table.

Characters—Dr. Merton and Professor Sperring forty-five to fifty years old. Jack, twenty, and Tom, Dick and Harry, nineteen and twenty. Mrs. O'Malley, forty, Betty, eighteen, and Kitty, Lucy and Alice about the same age.

ACT I.

(The professor is walking around the room searching for something and murmuring to himself.)

Prof.—Dear me—dear me—dear me! (There is a knock at the door.) Dear me—dear me—(knock is repeated.) Dear me—dear me—(knock is repeated.)

Mrs. O'Malley—(outside) Professor Sperring, are yez in?

Prof.—(turns to the door) Oh, yes—oh, dear me—yes. Come in. (Enter Mrs. O'M.) My dear madam, did you knock?

Mrs. O.—Did I knock? I should say I did.

Prof.—You see, I have misplaced a symplesometer. Do you see it anywhere?

Mrs. O.—Well, niver havin' made the acquaintance of—

Prof. —(suddenly) Ah! Here it is. (*Picks it up.*)
Fortunate! Most fortunate! If you had stepped on it!

Mrs. O.—It would have finished. That's sure.

(*The professor goes to the invention.*)

Mrs. O.—Don't monkey around that thing whin I'm in here. I get that nervous. I know it's goin' to explode some day and loike as not blow the roof off the house.

Prof.—My dear madam, how often must I tell you there is nothing here to explode?

Mrs. O.—Yes, I know; but I'm from Missouri.

Prof.—Missouri? I was quite certain you told me Boston.

Mrs. O.—That's roight—by way of Missouri.

Prof.—Now, I should say, Mrs. O'Malley, that was round about—quite round about. Much better to go directly to the point.

Mrs. O.—I agrees wid yez. No bating around the bush fer mine. So I'll be afther axing if yez knows what day o' the week this is?

Prof.—Why, to be sure—it's—(suddenly) Saturday.

Mrs. O.—Roight yez air, and Saturday is—

Prof.—Saturday, my dear Mrs. O'Malley, is er—er—Saturday!

Mrs. O.—Guess again, Professor, guess again.

Prof.—Guess—and why—

Mrs. O.—(encouragingly) Saturday is—

Prof.—(suddenly) Rent day!

Mrs. O.—That's right. Hold on to that, now while you've got it. Don't let go of the idea.

Prof.—Dear me! dear me! I had no idea Saturday could get here again so quickly. And I really fear I haven't your money this morning. Dear, dear! I haven't done any regular work yet. You see this all-absorbing invention—

Mrs. O.—(interrupting) Professor, will yez be afther lookin' to see if yez got it?

Prof.—Certainly—certainly—but I greatly fear—
(*looks in his pockets, then in drawer of table up R.*) I noticed only last evening my exchequer was getting painfully low. As I feared—as I feared— (*shakes his head.*)

Mrs. O.—(*patiently*) Try the other wan.

Prof.—Certainly—certainly—but—(*comes to table center; opens drawer*) Well! well! dear me! (*takes out some money*) Did you ever? My dear madam, here. (*Hands her the money.*) Now, that's curious. Very curious. I don't in the least recall—

Mrs. O.—Don't be afther tryin'. The strain moight be too much for yez. Have yez had any breakfast?

Prof.—Breakfast? Er—let me see—no, I haven't.

Mrs. O.—Well, go and git some. Yez can't work on an empty stomach.

Prof.—I'm not working on an empty stomach, I'm working on an invention to—

Mrs. O.—For the love o' Moike, Professor, get some breakfast.

Prof.—Yes, yes, no doubt it would be a wise idea.
(*Puts on his hat.*)

Mrs. O.—Take it from me, it would. It's a pity yez don't be afther gittin' some of thim ideas fer yersilf. What is it yez are lookin' fer?

Prof.—My hat.

Mrs. O.—On yer hid. (*Goes to door L.*) And here's the door—(*opens the door*) And the way out.

Prof.—Yes, to be sure—to be sure—thank you very much. (*Exit.*)

Mrs. O.—(*looking after him*) Can yez bate thot now? (*Turns away and looks slowly around room.*)

Betty—(*outside*) Mother!

Mrs. O.—Yis?.

Betty—Where are you?

Mrs. O.—(*goes to door*) Up here. Come up if yez loikes. (*Slight pause— Betty runs in L.*)

Betty—Where's the professor?

Mrs. O.—Gone after his breakfast, but he'll nivr remember what it is he's gone after. I hope he don't go near the park. There'll be a riot amongst the squirrels.

Betty—Poor old dear!

Mrs. O.—Shure he ain't so terrible poor. Always has his rint and says he ain't.

Betty—But, mother, he really thinks he hasn't any money. He's really worried at times.

Mrs. O.—(*devoutly*) Glory be to God, so am I. He'll be afther blowin' us all to smithereens some day. (*Looks fearfully at the invention.*)

Betty—(*thoughtfully*) I don't understand it.

Mrs. O.—Shure an' yez will whin it happens.

(*Enter Jack Merton, L.*)

Jack—Hello, the house!

Mrs. O.—And how did yez get in?

Jack—(*delighted to see Betty, who smiles at him behind her mother's back*) Walked, of course. . . Nothing to hinder. Door wide open.

Mrs. O.—The professor! Betty, go down and close the door.

Jack—(*quickly*) Oh, I closed it.

Mrs. O.—Then go and take the brid out of the oven.

Betty—(*demurely*) I took it out.

Mrs. O.—(*exasperated*) Well, go down and be doin' somethin' anyway.

Betty—(*sweetly*) Yes, mother. (*Exit L.*)

Jack—Oh, Mrs. O'Malley, have a heart!

Mrs. O.—She has somethin' more to do than stand around talkin' to the loikes of yez.

Jack—Oh, come, now. What have you got against me?

Mrs. O.—Nothing special, but ye're too loight hea'ed all together.

Jack—Light headed? Well, I like that! If you could see the scientific course I am pursuing at the university—

Mrs. O.—Don't talk to me about the university. Look at the poor ould professor. No hid at all—at all—

Jack—(*goes to the invention*) I should say he had some head to invent a machine like this.

Mrs. O.—Come away from it! (*Jack touches spring which causes a buzzing.*)

Mrs. O.—(*at the top of her voice*) Sthop, I tell yez.

Jack—Stand in front of it. I want to see if I can draw your heart out.

Mrs. O.—Is it crazy yez are, as well as the professor?

Jack—That's what the little buzzer is for.

Mrs. O.—For what?

Jack—When the ray is completed, it's going to draw out your hidden self.

Mrs. O.—(*astonished*) My hidden self?

Jack—That's what. The professor says we all have another self in here (*places his hand on his heart*) somewhere—a self that the world never sees, and it is our real self.

Mrs. O.—The Saints presarve us.

Jack—The Saints preserve us when our real selves stand revealed. Mrs. O'Malley, I think you'll be shown up with a heart as big as a whale.

Mrs. O.—(*pleased*) Gwan wid yez!

Jack—(*giving her a shove*) I bet inside you're the sentimental old girl.

Mrs. O.—Sthop yez nonsense, Jack Merton. You oughter be ashamed of yersilf. There's the bell. Are yez goin' to wait fer the professor?

Jack—Yes, if you don't mind.

(*Mrs. O. goes out L. Slight pause. Betty looks in at the window.*)

Betty—Jack!

Jack—(*hurrying to window*) Betty, you darling! (*helps her to climb in.*)

Betty—Sh! Hush! Mother thinks I have gone to the store.

Jack—Betty, you could never guess in a thousand years what's happened!

Betty—Something good; I know by your eyes. Tell me quick!

Jack—Gee! I don't know where to begin. Wel-l-l—I saw an ad in the paper where that local picture concern offered a prize for a Movie story—and I wrote one, Betty, about the professor and the invention—and, Betty—(*swallows in his excitement*) it took the prize!

Betty—Jack!

Jack—And that isn't all. They're going to send the head of the company down here this afternoon to see the professor and they want me to be here. They want me to be in the picture—and—Betty, I told them about you, dear, and they said maybe they could put you in.

Betty—Jack, have you gone crazy?

Jack—No, but I think I'm on the way. Betty, it's the chance of our lives. (*Hugs her.*) We can get married. We'll have oodles of money and—

Betty—Why, Jack, I can't act in the pictures—

Jack—(*interrupting*) Nonsense! Of course you can. You'll be a regular little star. I'll be the mess. Uncle Nick will have to turn his buzzer on me. (*Turns to the invention.*) Try it, Betty, and see if you can discover any talent being drawn out.

Betty—Jack, you are talking perfectly wild. Your father—my mother—

Jack—Oh, we're not going to consult them. Why should we, if we find we can earn our own living?

Betty—But our education. We mustn't interfere.

Jack—We are not going to. We will finish our education. Plenty of time—plenty of money and independence staring us in the face. Doesn't it listen good?

Betty—(with a sigh) Ye-es, you make everything sound all right, but just the same, it's wild.

Jack—Well, you'll be here when the great Mogul arrives. Thank the Lord it's Saturday. Everything has happened just right.

Betty—Who is the great Mogul?

Jack—I don't know what his name is. I don't believe the manager mentioned it. You'll be game, Betty. You won't give anything away?

Betty—(indignantly) You know that I won't.

Jack—Of course I do. Forgive me, dear. I didn't realize what I was saying. You're the most true blue little girl that ever breathed.

Dr. Merton—(outside) All right, Mrs. O'Malley, I'll wait.

Jack—Ye gods! It's dad! Come on, quick! (pulls *Betty* toward the window) Here, let me go first and I'll help you. (He climbs out window and tries to help her out; her dress catches and she sits on sill halfway in.)

Betty—Wait! Wait, Jack! My dress! It's caught! (Enter *Dr. Merton*, L.)

Dr. Merton—(astonished) Well, Miss Betty!

Betty—(demurely) How do you do, sir?

Dr. M.—My health is most excellent, thank you. And yours?

Betty—Never better.

Dr. M.—And may I inquire if you are on your way in or out?

Betty—(laughing) Out, kind sir. You see I started to go on an errand for mother and I came back for something I left in this room. Mother is in rather of a hurry and I thought she might object to my return trip.

Dr. M.—I see.

Betty—And I was just sitting here for a minute, looking at the invention.

Dr. M.—And do you believe in the professor's theory?

Betty—I think I do, in a way. We may have a hidden self—a something in us that we don't show to everyone, but I don't believe an electric ray will draw it out.

Dr. M.—(smiling) Good night, professor.

Betty—(thoughtfully, not noticing his remark) I think love might do it.

Dr. M.—(explosively) What?

Betty—Oh, Dr. Merton, I—I—was just thinking out loud.

Dr. M.—And is that the kind of thoughts you have? I wonder what we would find if you were drawn out.

Betty—(laughing) Something good if the right thought did it. (Starts to climb out window.)

Dr. M.—Wait! Do you know you're an interesting little piece of humanity, Betty? I like you more and more.

Betty—(thoughtfully) Yes, you would have to.

Dr. M.—And just what do you mean by that, young lady?

Betty—Well, you see, I like you so much. And that's what I mean about drawing out our hidden selves. If someone loves us enough their thought will draw out the best that is in us, and I guess it would work the other way, too. If they hated us enough they could draw out the worst.

Dr. M.—(amused) Well, my word! The professor has a rival in scientific thinking.

Betty—(looking out window) Here he comes. He's an old dear. It will be a terrible disappointment if his work isn't a success.

Dr. M.—We've got to wake him up some way. Make him see his foolishness. (*Betty climbs out window.*) Is

that safe, Miss Betty?

Betty—(standing outside looking in) Oh, yes, just a step—then another and I'm down.

*Dr. M.—*Betty, how about that something you came back for? Did you find it?

*Betty—*Yes, sir.

*Dr. M.—*Where is it? I don't see it anywhere about you.

*Betty—*I—I dropped it out the window.

*Dr. M.—*Hurt it any?

Betty—(trying not to laugh) I don't think so.

*Dr. M.—*Think it will be waiting for you at the corner?

*Betty—*Why, Dr. Merton, I can't guess what you mean.

*Dr. M.—*Like fun you can't! See here, Miss Betty, your mother said my young hopeful was up here waiting to see the professor. Why did he find it necessary to climb out the window when he heard me coming?

*Betty—*I think it was on my account.

*Dr. M.—*No, you don't think any such thing. What's he up to, now?

*Betty—*Goodbye, Dr. Merton. (*Disappears.*)

*Dr. M.—*Goodbye. (*He goes to table; opens drawer, takes some money from his pocket, slips it into drawer, closes drawer. Enter Professor S., his hands full of packages.*)

*Dr. M.—*Hello, old man! I'm waiting for you.

*Prof.—*Good morning, Phillip. Good morning. Good morning. (*Tries to change his packages about so he can shake hands.*) I trust you are in your usual health and spirits.

*Dr. M.—*About the same as usual, I think.

*Prof. S.—*Do you notice a pungent odor in the air this morning?

Dr. M.—No, I think not.

Prof. S.—I have noticed it for the last five minutes. Pungent, most pungent. (*Sniffs.*)

Dr. M.—(*suddenly*) What have you in the packages?

Prof.—Crackers, bread, and—er—cheese. Limburger. A choice bit.

Dr. M.—If there is anything more pungent than that, I have yet to learn what it is. (*Takes the packages from the professor and puts them on the table.*) Man, you're smelling your own cheese.

Prof.—Well, dear me! Curious, most curious.

Dr. M.—(*in despair*) I'll tell the world! Now see here, Nick, this sort of thing has got to stop. You are going nutty over that darned foolishness. (*Points to invention.*)

Prof.—My dear Phillip—

Dr. M.—You are just a young man, and look at yourself. You act like a hundred and nine. You don't know whether you are coming or going.

Prof.—(*earnestly*) Yes, Philip, yes, I do. When I went out I was coming, and when I came in I was going.

D. M.—(*holding his head*) This way out! This way out!

Prof.—This way out. I—I have heard that somewhere before. I don't seem to recall—

Dr. M.—It's a favorite of Jack's. I caught it from him.

Prof.—Yes, yes, Jack, dear lad!

Dr. M.—Nick, if you can turn your little buzzer on him and draw out some common sense, I'll admit your invention a success.

Prof.—Laughable now, quite laughable. He says if I can turn it on you and draw out a little extra coin he'll call it a success.

Dr. M.—Oh, he does? He only has to go a little further and I'll draw some prayers for mercy out of him.

Prof. S.—Now, now, Philip, the lad is young and—and blithe and gay.

Dr. M.—(*with a shout*) You've said something, professor. If you'd ever married and had a Jack of your own he'd give you something to really think about.

Prof.—And do you imagine, my dear Philip, that I don't think about this? (*Turns to invention.*)

Dr. M.—You don't think about anything else. That is just the trouble.

Prof.—And it's nearly perfected.

Dr. M.—Don't you fool yourself.

Prof.—Will you let me try it on you?

Dr. M.—Yes, when it's completed, I'll give you permission to try it on me to your heart's content.

Prof.—Ah! Then you are beginning to think my way.

Dr. M.—Not for a minute.

Prof.—But—

Dr. M.—My dear fellow, come out of it. That thing can never be perfected. I don't say we haven't a hidden self but if we have it can't be drawn out by electricity. There may be a way to draw out the best or the worst in us, but you haven't found it there. Nick, what do you do when you are tired of working on the invention?

Prof.—Why, I have my regular work, you know, for the magazine and the newspaper—

Dr. M.—(*interrupting*) Regular?

Prof.—Well, I do forget some weeks, I'll admit—

Dr. M.—It's wonderful that they let you keep on as you do. You have given up your position at the university, and you are endangering your only means of support, by neglect. How do you live, anyway?

Prof.—I hardly know. I'll admit it's wonderful how my income holds out.

Dr. M. — (dryly) Isn't it? But you haven't answered my question. What do you do when you are tired?

Prof. — Why—rest, to be sure.

Dr. M. — How?

Prof. — I wouldn't tell you for the world.

Dr. M. — Why not?

Prof. — It is so childish. So very silly.

Dr. M. — What is it? Come on. Tell me. I really want to know. I have a reason.

Prof. — I—well—if you are really so serious, I'll have to admit that I become rather fanciful at times, and I write the most foolish things you ever read. (*opens drawer in table, up R.*) Why, curious, very curious. I thought I had a manuscript here. That is the drawer where I usually keep it. (*Opens drawer in other table*) I must have misplaced it. Well, it doesn't matter. I will show it to you some other time. Philip, I'm almost afraid to inquire after what you have just said. Did you try to get me a backer?

Dr. M. — (pointing to invention) For that? No, I didn't and what's more I'm not going to. It wouldn't be right. I don't believe in it and I'm not going to try to make my friends put money where I wouldn't put it myself.

Prof. — Ah, Philip, I hope to draw some heart out of you some day. (*Sits down in an attitude of complete dejection.*)

Dr. M. — I know you are terribly disappointed but I can't help it. You are ruining yourself body and mind, and I won't help you on with it. I would give you the last cent I had if it would help you, but not for that thing. I want to talk to you about something else, but I know you won't care to listen now. Goodbye. (*Exit L.*)

(*The professor doesn't realize he has gone. There is a slight pause. A knock at the door; knock repeated twice.*)

Tom—(outside) Oh, professor! Professor Sper-ing!

Prof.—(suddenly starting up) Oh,—er—yes? Did some one call?

Tom—(opens the door and looks in) May I come in?

*Prof.—*Most assuredly. Come in. Why, it's Thomas, isn't it?

*Tom—*Yes, sir.

*Prof.—*I am glad to see you. (*Shakes hands with him.*) Very glad. I trust you are well.

*Tom—*Tip-top.

*Prof.—*Did you come down to see the invention?

*Tom—*Well not this morning, but I want to bring Harry and Dick and some of the girls this afternoon.

*Prof.—*Most assuredly. Delighted to have you. It is nearly perfected. Perhaps by afternoon I'll be ready to try it on some one of you.

*Tom—*All of us, professor, all of us. We're game. The girls are going to bring some tea and things along, and give you a regular party.

*Prof.—*Now, isn't that delightful of them, most delightful?

*Tom—*Have you a place we can hide Dick if we have to?

*Prof.—*Hide Richard? I don't comprehend.

.. *Tom—*We will explain this afternoon. In the meantime, if you don't know about it, you can't accidentally mention it.

*Prof.—*Quite true. Quite true.

*Tom—*Have you a place?

Prof.—(vaguely) A place?

Tom—(patiently) Yes—to hide Dick if we have to.

*Prof.—*To be sure—a closet—right there. (*Indicates door R.*)

Tom—(*goes to door R*) And it locks. Good! See you later, professor. (*Exit.*)

Prof.—(*yawning*) I wonder if I went to bed at all last night. (*Looks at invention and shakes his head.*) I wonder, I believe I'll seek some repose. (*Exit alcove.*)

(*Lights go slowly down. Stage is dark. A slight pause. There is a knock at the door, then another.*)

Mrs. O.—(*outside*) Professor! Are yez in?

(*The lights come slowly on. The professor is standing by the invention, his whole manner changed. He is wide awake and alert.*)

Prof.—Yes, Mrs. O'Malley, come in.

(*Enter Mrs. O.*)

Prof.—Mrs. O'Malley, my dear woman! Congratulate me. My work is completed. Think of it! At last.

Mrs. O.—Do yez say so? (*Looks at it doubtfully.*) And I suppose, now it's finished, it ain't so likely to explode at all, at all?

Prof.—Never was likely—never, my dear woman. Mrs. O'Malley, won't you be the first to try it?

Mrs. O.—Not on your life!

Prof.—But why? Think of it! Only think of it! It will bring you fame, my dear woman. Your picture will be in all the newspapers and great big head-lines about you.

Mrs. O.—Do yez say so? (*Goes toward invention. Regards it fearfully.*) What will it be loike? Will it hurt?

Prof.—Not in the least. Not in the least. You will never even feel it.

Mrs. O.—Shure and I've a moind to oblige yez.

Prof.—Do, Mrs. O'Malley. You will find it a most interesting experiment.

Mrs. O.—Shure, professor, it's a blarneyin' way yez got wid yez. I niver saw yez loike this before. What will I do?

Prof.—Stand right there in the window. Directly in the light.

Mrs. O.—Shure, and I feel as if I was goin' to have me phortygraf took.

Prof.—(*touches the buzzer*) Now, Mrs. O'Malley, just a minute. There. That's all.

Mrs. O.—(*disappointed*) All? And do yez call that intherestin'?

Prof.—Ah, the interesting time will begin with the change in you.

Mrs. O.—Change in me?

Prof.—Yes. When your hidden self begins to manifest.

Mrs. O.—Go on, professor! Don't be afther makin' me laugh. (*Bell rings.*) There's me bell. (*Goes to the door L. Stops by door.*) Sure, I forgot all about what I came for. Have yez seen Betty?

Prof.—No, I think not. No, I haven't seen her today.

Mrs. O.—I don't know where she's gone, at all, at all. (*Exit.*)

(*Pause. Enter Dr. M.*)

Prof.—(*delighted*) My dear Philip! At last! At last my work is completed.

Dr. M.—Impossible!

Prof.—No, not impossible, but possible. Now you will have to believe. Come! You promised that I might experiment on you to my heart's content.

Dr. M.—(*hesitating*) Ye-es, I did. Well, how long will it take? I have patients to look after, you know, and I'm hunting for Jack. That's what I came back for. Have you seen him today?

Prof.—No, he hasn't been here that I know of.

Dr. M.—I can't imagine where he is. I've been everywhere for him.

Prof.—Stand there by the window in the light. I will try a short ray this time. (*Dr. M. stands in the win-*

dow. *Prof. touches buzzer.*) That will do.

Dr. M.—(amused) It will? You haven't taken a very big chance with me. You must be afraid of what is about to be revealed. How much do you think you've drawn out?

*Prof.—*We shall see later.

*Dr. M.—*You are actually serious, Nick.

*Prof.—*So will you be when the change begins.

Dr. M.—(laughs) I'll come back when I feel it coming on, so that you may watch developments.

*Prof.—*Ah, my friend, this is no joke. This is the greatest scientific discovery of the ages. At last we are to see people as they really are.

*Dr. M.—*It ought to be the biggest show on earth, all right. I'll admit one thing now. You have changed without the aid of the buzzer. You actually seem human again.

*Prof.—*Yes, the anxiety has passed. I feel as if I had dropped a heavy load.

*Dr. M.—*That's good news, anyway. See you later. Goodbye. *(Exit L.)*

(Slight pause. Enter Mrs. O. with a book.)

*Mrs. O.—*Oh, professor, did yez iver read this book? *(Shows book to him.)*

Prof.—(takes book) "The Love Light in Her Eyes." *(Hands it back.)* I can't say that I ever did.

*Mrs. O.—*I wuz r'adin' it last noight. Shure, it's foine. It makes yez fale that queer in here. *(Puts her hand on her heart.)* Profissor, what do yez think about sicond marriage?

*Prof.—*My dear woman, I've never thought about a first.

*Mrs. O.—*Shure an' it's toime yez did. I am just afther thinkin' I'll be tryin' it a sicond toime. Moike's been gone noine years come Janooray, God rist his soul. And I seems to have another flutterin' in my heart.

Prof.—How long have you been feeling this way, Mrs. O'Malley?

Mrs. O.—Shure, I think it's jist the last foive minutes or so.

Prof.—Good Lord!

Mrs. O.—Shure, profissor, don't yez think ye'd be happier wid a woife and a home o' yer own?

Prof.—(*astounded*) My dear madame, my very dear madame—

Mrs. O.—Ah, gwan, profissor! Since whin have I been yez dear?

Prof.—(*with a gasp*) Mrs. O'Malley!

(*Bell rings.*)

Mrs. O.—Plague take the bell! (*Starts for door. Looks back.*) I'll be back. (*Exit.*)

Prof.—Heaven forbid!

(*Mrs. O. reënters.*)

Mrs. O.—Here's company to see yez, profissor. (*Adds in half-whisper:* I'll be back when we can be alone. (*Exit.*))

(*Enter Tom, followed by Lucy, Kitty, Alice, Dick and Harry.*)

Tom—Here we are.

All—(*speaking together*) Hello, professor! How do you do, professor? It's good to see you again. (*etc.*)

Prof.—Well, well! This is delightful, now. Delightful! I'm glad to see you again.

Alice—(*reproachfully*) You never should have left us.

Lucy—I don't see how you ever had the heart.

Kitty—And just for a machine.

Prof.—Ah, but my dear young lady, think of the importance of my work and I rejoice to say that at last it is completed.

Girls—Oh, is it? Really? How nice!

Dick—Good work, Professor Spering.

Harry—Great!

Tom—Tried it yet?

Prof.—Yes, indeed. Twice.

Harry—Success?

Prof.—(with a glance toward door.) Er—it is somewhat soon to say.

Alice—Are you going to try it on us?

Prof.—Most assuredly.

Lucy—Won't it be fun?

Dick—Hm! That's according to what the professor draws out.

Harry—Well, one thing, professor. Don't draw any charm out of Kitty. I can't stand for any more.

Kitty—Harry!

Alice—Let's have tea first.

Lucy—Yes, something to stimulate us for the ordeal.

Tom—Yes, draw out the tea first.

Dick—(as the others groan) I hope you'll draw some humor out of Tom. His comes so hard it would be a relief to get something spontaneous once in a while.

Kitty—Do you mind how we upset your room, professor?

Prof.—Not in the least. Most delightful. There are dishes and a teakettle in the closet.

Lucy—Clear off the table, Dick.

(Boys clear the table and open the packages which the girls brought in, while the girls bring teakettle and cups from the closet.)

Tom—That is to be your lair if necessary, Dick.

Dick—(goes to closet) Is it? I guess I'll explore.

Alice—We need water.

Prof.—Mrs. O'Malley will supply us.

Tom—I'll ask her. (*Exit with tea kettle.*)

Dick—(*comes from closet with banjo in his hand*)
Look what's here. I always wanted to play one of these things.

Prof.—Did you indeed? I used to play in the mandolin club in my days of youth and folly.

Dick—(*strumming the banjo*) Professor, if you can draw some music out of me you will be going some.

Prof.—I fear you don't take my invention seriously. I intend it to do good in the world. To be of benefit rather than amusement.

Harry—We understand that and we will take it seriously, but we are bound to get some fun out of everything, you know.

Prof.—Yes—Yes—I worked among you long enough to realize that.

Dick—(*placing banjo in closet*) I hope I don't have to run for cover. Me thinks it would be somewhat warmish in there.

Prof.—What is all this about hiding, Richard?

Alice—Why, tonight is Sophomore night, and—do you remember about Sophomore night?

Prof.—Well, now, let me see. Let me think.

Lucy—Elections, you know, and the Juniors try to steal our president so he can't go to the banquet—

Prof.—Oh, yes, indeed—yes, indeed. I recall it quite clearly.

Tom—Dick is to be our president, and we want to keep him here until it's time for the banquet. I think we are safe, but if anyone should show up we want a place to put him for safe-keeping.

Prof.—I see—I see.

Kitty—I don't believe there's any danger. We got safely away and took such a round-about way.

(*Enter Tom with kettle.*)

Prof.—Of course, Jack is likely to come in at any time.

Tom—Jack's engaged this afternoon. I looked out for that. Here's the water.

(The young people gather around the table while Alice makes the tea. Mrs. O. steps into room, motions to the professor. He finally notices her and steps to one side.)

Mrs. O.—Is there anything you nade besides the water?

Prof.—*(nervously)* No, I think not.

Mrs. O.—Shure, there ain't a thing on earth but what I would do for youse, profissor. *(Gives a long sigh.)* Shure, I nivr noticed what a handsome man yez air, profissor. *(Exit.)*

Kitty—Goodness, Harry, don't put everything on this one table. Put some of the things somewhere else.

Harry—*(looking about the room)* Where, for instance? *(begins to make vague gestures with his hands.)*

Lucy—What are you doing?

Harry—Trying to remove the dishes. Will some kind gentleman in the audience kindly lend me a silk hat, a rabbit, and a hundred-dollar bill. I always was of the idea that I ought to be a prestidigitator, but I never as yet have got away with it.

Tom—*(walking over to the invention)* Say, while the tea draws let the professor do some drawing. I must admit to being curious as to how this works.

Dick—Go to it, professor. Here's a willing victim.

Prof.—Very well. Stand right there, Richard. *(Indicates place by window.)* There's really nothing to see at first. *(Touches the buzzer.)* We have to await results. That is all.

Dick—Next! Come on, someone. If I'm going to turn into a lobster, I want company.

Harry—You have the wrong idea, Dick. We fondly

hope you will turn out of one. (*Takes Dick's place.*) All right, professor. (*Professor touches the buzzer.*)

Alice—How does it feel?

Harry—Just a queer sensation here. (*Places his hand over his heart.*)

Tom—Professor, I'm afraid you aren't so scientific after all. One look at Kitty has the same effect on him.

Kitty—For goodness' sake, boys, talk a little sense once in a while.

Prof.—What about one of the young ladies?

Alice—Oh, let's wait and see how it affects the boys.

Lucy—Oh, I'm not afraid. (*Takes Harry's place, and the professor touches the buzzer.*) Oh, professor—(*Suddenly begins to laugh.*) I never felt so silly in my life. (*Goes forward to table, still laughing.*) Oh, Alice, I never noticed what a funny little nose you've got. (*Laughs hysterically and others begin to grow alarmed.*)

Dick—Let's have refreshments.

Lucy—And Tom kind of squints.

Kitty—Have some tea, Lucy. (*Alice pours a cup, and Kitty hands it to Lucy, who becomes more quiet.*)

Prof.—(*as they all draw near the tea table*) Curious! Such rapid results.

Tom—(*walks up toward window and regards the invention doubtfully.*) I'll say rapid. (*Suddenly as he looks out window*) Here comes Jack! And I thought he was out of the way for the afternoon. Good Lord! He's climbing up. Dick—quick!

(*Dick rushes to closet, goes in and Tom locks door and takes key out. All appear unconscious of anything wrong as Jack enters by window.*)

Harry—Some tea, please.

Jack—(*stepping over sill.*) Uncle Nick! (*stops and regards them in surprise.*) For Heaven's sake, what are you all doing here? (*Lucy begins to giggle.*)

Alice—Giving the professor a tea.

Tom—We came down to see the invention.

Kitty—Will you have some tea, Jack?

Jack—(somewhat stiffly) Well, I'm not in the habit of attending parties I'm not invited to—

Tom—(interrupting) Oh, forget it, Jack.

Harry—What's the matter with you?

Prof.—My dear lad!

Jack—Oh, don't pay any attention to me. I didn't mean to be disagreeable. I'm about crazy. I have come down here to hide from father. He's chasing me everywhere, and I'm scared to death.

(All regard Jack in astonishment.)

Prof.—Afraid of your father?

Tom—What are you talking about?

Harry—Your father is the best ever.

Girls—Yes.

Alice—A perfect dear.

Jack—He always has been, I'll admit, but I wish you could see him now. I can't imagine what's come over him. He's as furious as a bull. You never heard anything like it. I don't think he's responsible for what he's saying.

Prof.—(appalled) Good heaven!

(Lucy giggles.)

Jack—(to Lucy) What on earth is the joke?

Lucy—Your hair is standing on end and you look so funny.

Jack—(exasperated and imitating her) O-h, do-o-o I?

Alice—(hands Jack a cup of tea) Here, Jack, this will compose your nerves.

Jack—(taking the cup) I wish I thought so.

(Dick is suddenly heard playing the banjo in closet)

Jack—(*in astonishment*) What in the name of common sense? Where is it?

Tom—W-w-what?

Jack—(*putting his cup on table*) A banjo.

Lucy—(*giggling*) I shall die I know.

Alice—(*to Prof.*) Who in the house plays the banjo?

Prof.—Dear me! I couldn't possibly say. Doubtless Mrs. O'Malley. (*Music stops.*)

Jack—Mrs. O'Malley nothing.

Kitty—I don't hear any banjo.

Jack—(*hesitating*) Not just this minute, but—(*music starts again.*) There! There it is! Professor, it's in the closet. (*Hurries to closet; tries door.*) It's locked! Where's the key?

Prof.—Dear me! I couldn't possibly say.

(*Betty enters through window.*)

Betty—Jack! Quick! Your father! Mother has just let him in.

Jack—This way out! (*Hurries to window and leaps out.*)

Betty—(*suddenly, as she hears the music*) Good gracious! What's that?

Lucy—Dick playing the banjo. The professor has drawn him out. (*Harry, unnoticed by the others, stands by closet door and waves his hands.*)

Alice—(*to Lucy; exasperated*) Well, that doesn't compare with what he has drawn out of you.

Lucy—I shall die, I know.

(*Music stops.*)

Kitty—For goodness' sake let Dick out of the closet.

Tom—(*hurries to closet*) Yes, yes, of course.

Harry—Don't open that door. I warn you. Don't open that door. Ye gods! I believe I have done it.

.. All—(*astounded*) Done what?

Harry—S-s-s-h-h!

(Enter Mrs. O., followed by Dr. M., who is in a violent rage.)

Mrs. O.—But I tell yez Betty ain't up here.

Dr. M.—(pushing past her) I'll see for myself. Out of my way, woman.

Prof.—My dear Philip.

Dr. M.—(pointing to Betty) There she is. I knew she was here.

Mrs. O.—Well, thin, it's more than I knew. Betty, darlint, where have yez been?

Dr. M.—(looking around) And Jack, he's here.

Prof.—I assure you he's not here.

Dr. M.—I know better. He's wherever that girl is. He's with her all the time and I won't have it.

Mrs. O.—And why not?

Dr. M.—My son? Your daughter?

Mrs. O.—Shure, love will go where it's sint. Ain't that so, profissor?

Prof.—(desperately) My dear woman, I don't know anything about it.

Dr. M.—(to the professor) Come! Where is he? You are hiding him.

Prof.—Absurd, my dear Phillip.

Dr. M.—You can't fool me. (To Betty.) Where is he?

Mrs. O.—Shure, darlint, yez don't have to give your swateheart away at all, at all. Thank the Lord yez got a mother who is afther knowin' what it is to have a quare falin' around her heart.

(Banjo is heard in closet.)

Dr. M.—What's that?

Mrs. O.—(astonished) The saints be koind.

Prof.—What is it, Philip?

Dr. M.—A banjo.

Prof.—A banjo? Where?

Dr. M.—That's just what I want to know. (*Looks about.*)

Prof.—Dear me! Do you fancy you hear a banjo?

Dr. M.—Fancy? I know that I hear one.

Prof.—Isn't that curious, now? Does anyone else think they hear a banjo? (*Music stops.*)

All—No, of course not.

Lucy—Oh, I shall die. I know I shall.

(*Music starts.*)

Dr. M.—There it is.

Prof.—My dear Philip, I can tell you what the trouble is. You probably had in you an ear for music, and I have drawn it out.

Dr. M.—Do you imagine you can stuff that down my throat? (*Strides toward the closet.*) The music is right here. (*Tries door.*) The door is locked. Now, I know Jack is in there. I'll break every bone in his body. Open this door or I'll break it in.

Girls—(*frightened*) Doctor!

Dr. M.—(*Turns on them*) That will do. (*to Lucy*) What are you laughing at?

Lucy—Y-y-you!

Dr. M.—(*beside himself*) Stop it!

Lucy—I c-c-cant. The professor has drawn me out.

Dr. M.—Open this door!

Tom—(*stepping forward*) Sure, I'll open it. You are mistaken, Dr. Merton. Jack isn't in there. It's Dick. (*Starts to unlock the door.*)

Harry—No! Don't! I warn you. Don't open that door. Dick isn't there!

Tom—(*astounded*) What do you mean?

Harry—I—I—did it—I did the presto act. The professor has drawn me out, too. I changed them but I can't change them back again.

Tom—And you mean—

Dr. M.—(at the top of his voice) Open that door.

Tom—I'll see you hanged first.

Jack—(from closet) Open the door, Tom.

Dr. M.—(satisfied) Ah!

(Tom opens the door; Jack steps into room carrying the banjo.)

Dr. M.—At last!

Jack—(bowing and speaking airily) Yes, father, at last; but just too late.

Dr. M.—Too late?

Jack—Betty is my wife. (Goes to her and puts his arm around her.) We were married this afternoon.

All—What!

Mrs. O.—(delighted) Can yez bate thot, now? (Kisses Betty and embraces Jack.)

Dr. M.—(turning on the professor) This your doings. You drew them out or they never would have dared to do this.

Prof.—No—no—I haven't touched them.

Dr. M.—You can't fool me. Well, I'll give you a dose of your own medicine. (Grabs the professor and pulls him toward the invention.) I'll draw you out and then we'll see.

Prof.—(wildly struggling to get away) No, no! I don't want to be drawn out. I've had enough. Let me go! Help! This way out!

(The girls scream and the boys try to rescue the professor. The lights go out, then come slowly on. The professor is alone, running about the stage calling "help" and "this way out.")

Betty—(outside, knocks on door) Professor, what has happened? Shall I come in?

Jack—(outside) Yes, go in.

(Enter Jack and Betty. They hurry to the professor.)

Jack—What is it? What has happened?

(Mrs. O. hurries in out of breath.)

Mrs. O.—What is it, professor? Can I help yez?

Prof.—*(alarmed)* No—no! Keep away. Don't come near me. Don't think of it. I beg of you don't speak of it again.

Mrs. O.—Is it crazy he is? I knew it would come. The poor ould man. Hold him while I get hilp. *(Starts for the door. Enter Dr. M. Shure, doctor, an' I'm thot glad to see yez. The professor has gone off his hid, poor man.*

Dr. M.—Nonsense!

Betty—I think he's been dreaming.

Prof.—*(grasping for the truth)* Dreaming? Is it possible? Is it possible that it isn't true?

Jack—How about it, Uncle Nick? Had a nightmare in the afternoon?

Prof.—The invention isn't finished?

Dr. M.—Of course not.

Prof.—*(hopefully)* And none of you have been drawn out?

All—No.

Prof.—*(delighted)* Thank the Lord! Thank the Lord! My good friends, my very good friends, all of you stay just as you are. If you've a hidden self I don't want to see it.

Dr. M.—Nick, old boy, congratulations! You've come to your senses.

Mrs. O.—Saints be praised!

Jack—Three cheers.

Betty—Oh, professor!

Prof.—*(covering the invention)* I'll cover this over so that I can't even see it until I can get rid of it altogether. Think of it! Think of the result if I had completed it and drawn out the worst in all my friends. Phil-

ip, I'm going to work on something worth while. I don't know what, but (*vaguely*) there's the magazine and the newspaper—

Dr. M.—(*taking manuscript from his pocket*) And your romance.

Prof.—(*in surprise*) You have my manuscript?

Dr. M.—Yes, I took it to read. When I questioned you this morning it was to ascertain if you wrote it. My friend, you have a desire to draw out the best in people and here is the way you can do it. A man who loves humanity enough to draw the characters in this romance will draw out the best in those who read. The pen directed by— (*smiles at Betty*) —the right thought, is mightier than a machine. (*Suddenly turns to Jack.*) Young man, you have an appointment here this afternoon.

Jack—I, father? An appointment?

Dr. M.—Yes, to meet the president of the Empire Art Film Company.

Jack—How in heaven's name do you know that?

Dr. M.—I am the president.

Jack—Ye gods!

Betty—What?

Mrs. O.—Will yez listen to thot, now?

Prof.—Surprising—most surprising!

Dr. M.—It isn't generally known. I want a rest once in a while from pills and powders. Jack, I'm proud of you. I didn't think you had it in you. And, Betty, of course, is the little girl you told the manager about.

Jack—Well—rather.

Mrs. O.—And what did he say about Betty, I'll be afther askin'?

Dr. M.—Only what was good, I assure you. If Jack has his way, some day Betty is going to be my little girl as well as yours.

Mrs. O.—Well, I'll have yez—

Dr. M.—(interrupting) Don't get excited, Mrs. O'Malley. That's a long look ahead. And now the car is below and I want you all to come down to the company's studio, where I've arranged for a little supper, and then I have a business proposition to make. I need you all in my new line. Professor, we want to put pictures on the screen that will draw out the best in every man, woman and child who comes to our theaters. (*Goes to door, open it and bows to them.*) This way out, ladies and gentlemen—this way out.

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